

CURRENTLY PENDING CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): Apparatus for authenticating an entity in a shared hosting computer network environment, said apparatus comprising:
 - a service provider computer containing a plurality of entity sites;
 - connected to the service provider computer, a trusted third party computer adapted to provide a conglomerated authenticity certification to the service provider computer; and
 - coupled to the trusted third party computer, converting means for enabling an entity to seek to convert the conglomerated authenticity certification into an individualized authenticity certification covering that entity's site, wherein the individualized authenticity certification is distinct from the conglomerated authenticity certification the and the individualized authenticity certifications are different for different entity sites.
2. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the converting means comprises a plurality of conversion tokens pre-purchased from the trusted third party by the service provider.
3. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least one entity's site has received an individualized authenticity certification;
 - at least one client computer is connected to said authenticated entity site over the computer network; and
 - a seal evidencing the entity site's authentication is displayed on the client computer.
4. (Original): The apparatus of claim 3, wherein clicking on the seal results in authentication information being displayed on the client computer.

5. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least one entity's site has received an individualized authenticity certification;

at least one client computer is connected to said authenticated entity site over the computer network; and

the client computer downloads from the trusted third party computer a plug-in module, said plug-in module containing evidence of the individualized authenticity certification.

6. (Original): The apparatus of claim 5, wherein activation of the plug-in module results in authentication information being displayed on the client computer.

7. (Currently Amended): A method by which a trusted third party empowers a service provider to offer to entities having sites hosted on said service provider's computer an ability to seek from the trusted third party individualized authenticity certifications covering said entities' sites, said method comprising the steps of:

the trusted third party providing the service provider with a conglomerated authenticity certification; and

the service provider making available to the entities a conversion means by which the entities may seek individualized authenticity certifications from the trusted third party, wherein the individualized authenticity certifications are distinct from the conglomerated authenticity certification and the individualized authenticity certifications are different for different entity sites.

8. (Original): The method of claim 7, wherein the conversion means comprises a plurality of digital tokens pre-purchased from the trusted third party by the service provider.

9. (Original): The method of claim 8, wherein the service provider sends a token, an activation code, and an address of the trusted third party's computer to an entity wishing to obtain an individualized authenticity certification.

10. (Currently Amended): In a computer network in which a service provider computer hosts a plurality of entities, a method by which an entity desiring authentication applies for an individualized authenticity certification from a trusted third party, said method comprising the steps of:

the trusted third party providing a conglomerated authenticity certification to the service provider computer;

the service provider computer making available to the desirous entity an activation tool; and

the desirous entity presenting the activation tool to the trusted third party, thereby petitioning the trusted third party to convert the conglomerated authenticity certification into an individualized authenticity certification covering the desirous entity's site, wherein the individualized authenticity certification is distinct from the conglomerated authenticity certification and the individualized authenticity certifications are different for different entity sites.

11. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the activation tool comprises a digital token that has been pre-purchased from the trusted third party by the service provider.

12. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the activation tool comprises a digital activation code.

13. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the activation tool is appended to a URL of a computer associated with the trusted third party.

14. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the desirous entity presents its domain name to the trusted third party.

15. (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein the trusted third party uses the domain name to access a WHOIS database.

16. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the trusted third party accesses a proof of right database based upon information provided by the desirous entity.

17. (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein, when the desirous entity is deemed acceptable according to the proof of right database, the trusted third party issues an individualized authenticity certification to the desirous entity.

18. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein the activation tool is a digital token, and the trusted third party decrements a token counter.

19. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein the individualized authenticity certification is evidenced by a seal.

20. (Original): The method of claim 19, wherein a user computer accesses a Website of the authenticated entity, the seal is downloaded onto the user computer, and the seal is displayed on the user computer.

21. (Original): The method of claim 20, wherein clicking on the seal on the user computer causes an information page to be displayed on the user computer, said information page containing background information concerning the individualized authenticity certification.

22. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein the individualized authenticity certification is evidenced by a plug-in module.

23. (Original): The method of claim 22, wherein a user computer accesses a Website associated with the trusted third party, the plug-in module is downloaded onto the user computer, and a representation of the plug-in module is displayed on the user computer.

24. (Original): The method of claim 23, wherein activation of the plug-in module on the user computer causes an information page to be displayed on the user computer, said information page containing background information concerning the individualized authenticity certification.

25. (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium containing a computer program by which a trusted third party empowers a service provider to offer to entities having sites hosted on said service provider's computer an ability to obtain from the trusted third party individualized authenticity certifications covering said entities' sites, said computer program containing instructions for:

enabling the trusted third party to provide the service provider with a conglomerated authenticity certification; and

enabling the service provider to make available to the entities a conversion means by which the entities may seek individualized authenticity certifications from the trusted third party, wherein the individualized authenticity certifications are distinct from the conglomerated authenticity certification and the individualized authenticity certifications are different for different entity sites.

26. (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium containing a computer program by which an entity having a site hosted on a service provider computer that hosts a plurality of entities' sites can seek authentication from a trusted third party, said computer program containing instructions for:

enabling the trusted third party to provide a conglomerated authenticity certification to the service provider computer;

enabling the service provider computer to make available to the seeking entity an activation tool; and

enabling the seeking entity to present the activation tool to the trusted third party, thereby petitioning the trusted third party to convert the conglomerated authenticity certification into an individualized authenticity certification covering the seeking entity's site, wherein the individualized authenticity certification is distinct from the conglomerated authenticity certification and the individualized authenticity certifications are different for different entity sites.